THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE;

OR

Literary Miscellany.

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For the Evening Fire-side.

Your young men ſhall ſee viſions, and your old men ſhall dream dreams. Acts. ii. 17.

Having attentively peruſed the *ſpeculations* of a correſpondent, who ſtiles himſelf a DREAMER, and who ſeems diſpoſed to eſtabliſh the *visionary* ſentiment, that dreams are altogether the effect of ſome "partial excitement in the brain," (as he expreſſes himſelf) or ſome other natural cauſe; and, though I do not wiſh to enter into any philoſophiſtical diſpute with the DREAMER, yet I will mention a few things that occurred to me as I was reading them. Perhaps I may be a little "*unphilosophical*;" and poſſibly none the worſe for not having yet wandered ſo far into the dark and intricate mazes of Philoſophy, as himſelf. I confeſs I have not been ſo ingenious as to diſcover a natural cauſe for every effect that has claimed my attention; nor ſo condeſcending as to admit thoſe reaſonings as concluſive, which have been framed in order to exclude a *divine* agency. I am one of thoſe old-faſhioned beings, who believe that the Deity yet governs the world, and continues to govern it by his own *immediate* power: that it is ſtill conſiſtent with His goodneſs and mercy, to interpoſe for our happineſs by extraordinary means, and by means that cannot fairly be attributed to what are generally ſtiled the laws of Nature; and I have not only thoſe facts that have come under my own notice in confirmation of my ſentiments, but the additional and important teſtimony of the ſacred writings; for I am not yet ſo marvelloufly enlightened as to ſee why the teſtimony of the Scriptures ſhould be rejected.

When the great apoſtle Peter was commiſſioned to preach the bleſſed Goſpel to the houſe of Cornelius, ſuch were his prejudices againſt the poor Gentiles, that a *ſupernatural* viſion (as I apprehend) was neceſſary to remove them; and lo! a ſheet knit at the four corners, appeared to be let down from heaven, having in it all manner of four-footed beaſts, and creeping things, and birds; and a voice came to Peter, ſaying, "riſe, Peter, ſlay and eat:" theſe expreſſions were hardly any conſequence of an aſſociation of ideas, for all his former habits ſpoke a contradictory language; "Not ſo, Lord," ſaid Peter, "for I have never eaten any thing that is common, or unclean:" but the voice came a ſecond time, ſaying, "What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common." This extraordinary language, with the "*attending circumſtances*," tended ſo to remove the apoſtle's prejudices, as to open a door to the Gentiles, for the "preaching of *peace* by Jeſus Chriſt." If any of my readers ſhould doubt the poſſibility of a ſupernatural dream, I willingly refer them to this account of Peter's viſion, as related in the Acts, chap. x. There the plain narrative of the dream, and of the attendant circumſtances, may be ſeen; and alſo, what is a ſtrong additional evidence of its divine origin, the ſingular viſion of Cornelius. But perhaps the DREAMER will call this a "*casual incident*." It will be much better for his purpoſe, to deny the truth of the narration altogether. As to the "*attending circumſtances*," they cannot anſwer his end; eſpecially, if they are "*properly attended to*." "No irregular circulation," no "partial excitement," (if I apprehend his meaning) could have produced ſuch a viſion. Here ideas were excited, that were "quite *original*," notwithſtanding their *odd combination*; a new train of thought was opened in Peter's mind, new doctrines were impreſſed on his underſtanding, and finally he was convinced of this ſublime truth, that "God is no reſpecter of perſons, but that in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him."

I am not in favour of attaching a myſterious meaning to every excurſion of the mind, while the body is locked in ſlumber; but it is neceſſary to beware of excluding the divine agency, even from a dream. The benevolence of the Deity, who is ever watchful over his creation, and always diſpoſed to bleſs the workmanſhip of his hand, has various ways of communicating good, and of preventing evil; and it becomes us as rational free-agents, not to cloſe any avenue of mercy, which his goodneſs has opened. Notwithſtanding what has been advanced, I can ſee no reaſon why the dream that is "*ſeriously* told," and ſuppoſed by the narrator to forebode a future event, ſhould ſo excite the DREAMER's riſibles, as to "exceed all the powers of his face" to be ſerious alſo. If he had been in Lord Lyttleton's company, when he related the account of his wonderful viſion, which foreboded future and dreadful events, perhaps they might have had a laugh together; but, if he had remained a few days with his lordſhip, he might have ſeen cauſe for ſerioufneſs alſo; he might have ſeen ſadneſs aſſuming her cloudy empire over his lordſhip, in defiance of mirth and jollity: he might often have ſeen the *assumed* ſmile retire, to give place to marks of *real* diſtreſs; and he would certainly have ſeen (what I acknowledge a ſpurious philoſophy cannot teach him) that a dream is not always a mere "phantom of the brain."

Now, if "no part of metaphyſics is better eſtabliſhed, than that which teaches that the mind is altogether acquired thro' the medium of the ſenſes," then metaphyſics, I apprehend, is a poor dependance for the ſearcher after truth, "a broken reed at beſt." The precepts of the Goſpel, founded in immutable certainty, teach a different doctrine; conſtantly enforcing the neceſſity of divine revelation, and of ſupernatural influence. Now we know that this revelation, ſo frequently ſpoken of in the ſacred writings, is not a revelation through the medium of the ſenſes, but immediately *to the mind*, and peculiarly in thoſe moments, when the activity of the ſenſes is moſt repreſſed; and by no means incompatible (as I apprehend) with a ſtate of ſleep.

Philoſophy is uſeful on ſubjects that come completely within its ſphere, but elſewhere it cannot give ſatisfaction:

" God never meant that man should scale the heavens,
" By strides of human wisdom."

COWPER.

he therefore that attempts to explain every effect, indiſcriminately, by the general operations of nature, will loſe himſelf in a dark and dangerous labyrinth; he will find himſelf perplexed with doubts, and ſurrounded with uncertainties.

The DREAMER has been peculiarly unhappy in the ſelection of his motto, and in his quotation from Milton, as the writers of both held ſentiments oppoſing his own. " Behold, (ſays his motto) " the dreamer cometh." The reader need only to recur to the ſacred text to diſcover, that this was ſaid of Joſeph, the eleventh ſon of the Patriarch Jacob; whoſe dreams proved a ſingular prediction of his future greatneſs, and muſt overthrow our modern DREAMER's unſupportable hypotheſis. Milton's Paradiſe Loſt need only to be referred to, to convince the reader, that its writer believed in premonitory dreams, and therefore could not be fairly quoted to prove an adverſe opinion.

EVANGELICUS.

For the Evening Fire-side.

THE SYLPH.

ARIEL, from the boist'rous main,
Greets his brother bards once more,
Pours again the grateful strain
On his much lov'd native shore.

Far o'er Neptune's foaming wave,
He has dar'd for wealth to roam;
But no more to wealth a slave,
Poor, he seeks his native home.

Fortune to his prayer denied,
Affluence in his lap to pour;
And th' aspiring voice of pride
Sunk amid the ocean's roar.

But at home, where friends will smile,
Tho' no splendour crown his name,
Pleasure shall the hours beguile,
With fair friendship's holy flame.

While retiring Winter sheds
Parting glooms upon the scene,
And vegetation o'er the meads
Scarcely shows the embryo green;

By the midnight lamp I'll pore,
Studious, o'er the moral page;
Or in thought sublimely soar
Far above the whirlwind's rage:

Or with Poesy's sweet powers
Oft the lingering time beguile,
While in Heliconian bowers,
Fostering muses sweetly smile.

Or if dullness stains the page
Where alone should genius shine,
Often, with a noble rage,
Call the rights of satire mine.

Transfix the puny insect throng,
Who around the taper play,
Self-created sons of song,
Buzzing in the muses' ray;

Who, like TIMID, boldly dar'd,
When the foe had left the field,
To attack whom late they fear'd,
When disarm'd of sword and shield.

Ye to whom the task is given
To direct the muse's page,
Keep the balance justly even,
Nor in party feuds engage.

But when folly favour craves,
Dare to check the bold pretence,
Nor, to false opinion slaves,
E'er prefer her songs to sense.

ARIEL to your aid shall give
All that he can call his own;
Pleas'd once more at home to live,
And mount again sweet Fancy's throne.

When the vernal blossoms shed
Fragrance o'er the smiling plain,
From the towering mountain's head
Sylphs shall pour the choral strain.

Or when bards are wrapt in sleep,
And in dreams are crown'd with bay,
To their couches softly creep,
To inspire the embryo lay.

Soon again shall ARIEL pay
To the motley throng their due,
Now suspend the trifling lay,
" Scribbling bards again adieu."

ARIEL.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

Meſſrs. Editors,

In looking over the letters of friendship addressto me in times past, (an employment which is my frequent amusement) I recognized with peculiar satisfaction an spistle from an esteemed friend, from which the following stanzas are extracted. To me they are valuable, from a conviction that they really pourtray a mind under the pressure of calamity. I am persuaded the writer will excuse the liberty I have taken with his private correspondence, since, if partiality has not biassed my judgment, they will be received with interest by the reader of sensibility.

March 4. D.

I read thy letter o'er and o'er,
As many I had done before,
And thank'd the one that wrote it;
For there I saw repeated still,
Those sentiments of right good will,
Which please, tho' often quoted.

From scheme to scheme though oft I range,
Like others, idly fond of change,
(For man's a fickle creature,)
In this at least I steady prove,
My friend I wish unchang'd in love,
Unalter'd e'en in feature.

Oh! were it not that friendship's power
Can temper life's too poignant sour,
Affection's darts repelling,
Desponding, doubting and dismayed,
Ere this, perhaps, I had been laid
Withih the grave's dark dwelling.

While cheerful labour, unoppress'd
With pining care, is sunk to rest,
Unheedful of the morrow:
Companion of the dreary night,
I tell the moments' tardy flight,
Those moments due to sorrow.

Sad recollection, bath'd in tears,
Recounts the story of my years,
A melancholy chapter;
She points to days when I was young,
When every chord to joy was strung,
And hope approach'd to rapture:

Then bids before my fancy fly
Each blasted hope, each blasted joy,
On night's black canvas tracing;
The gloomy image of despair,
Knitting his brows with savage air,
And attitude menacing.

But why obtrude upon thy sight
The picture of a feverish night,
And hypochondriac notions?
Avaunt, ye urchins, let me taste
One sympathetic drop at least,
Of others' happier potions.

Close in the chambers of my soul
I'll hide affliction's heavy scroll,
For private rumination;
For 'tis not meet with self-distress
T'oo much a feeling friend t' oppress,
O'er taxing his compassion.

For the Evening Fire-side.

" Friendship, sweet'ner of life, and solder of society,
I owe thee much. Thou hast deserv'd from me
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay."

BLAIR.

How drear and gloomy, how diveſted of all that tends to pleaſure, would be our paſſage through life, were we deprived of the conſolations of friendſhip!

When ſickneſs ſpreads her darkening clouds around, and pain and anguiſh attend our ſteps each paſſing hour, this cordial balm brings cheering comfort, in ſome meaſure alleviating our diſtreſs with tendereſt ſympathy. When perplexed with the harraſſing concerns of the world, the counſel of a boſom friend is ſweet and pleaſant to the ſoul: and ſometimes even on deſpair's

dark verge, the voice of a friend has, as it were, awakened the forlorn wretch to new life, healed his wounded ſpirit, and implanted in his boſom, cauſe for eternal gratitude. All that is within me recoils at the ſtoical rantings of ſome of our modern writers, who have exhauſted their fund of eloquence in decrying the influence, yea, denying the very exiſtence of Friendſhip. It is vain! There is, I believe, an innate ſenſe of its power in the breaſt of every one not thoroughly vitiated.

I have always been much out of humor with that claſs of gloomy and diſappointed writers who are perpetually declaiming againſt the inſtability of Friendſhip; and never could pleaſe myſelf with the exclamation of the lonely hermit:—

" And what is Friendship but a name,
" A charm that lulls to sleep,
" A shade that follows wealth or fame,
" But leaves the wretch to weep?"

That which "follows wealth or fame," muſt be indeed but a fleeting phantom of an hour: but different, far different is that which cauſes us when actuated by its influence to prefer the good of another to our own; to lay aſide all ſelfiſh conſiderations, and manfully act the friendly part.

ALIQUIS.

New-Caſtle, March 2, 1806.

For the Evening Fire-side.

ON THE DEATH OF CATHARINE L——.

[*By an intimate friend.*]

'Tis finish'd! the sad toil is o'er;
Sickness and sorrow wound no more,
Nor pining cares molest:
From all that wrung the bitter tear,
Which mark'd the path of suffering here,
The happy soul has rest.

Though strew'd with tears the path she trod,
With faith and hope her bosom glow'd,
And panted for the skies:
Now bursts from all the bonds of clay,
Triumphant glories gild the way,
Where the pure spirit flies.

O! form'd to shew the thoughtless fair,
How far above each trifling care
Th' immortal mind should soar!
To teach them while bright fortune's day,
And youth and beauty gild the way,
The soul should rise to more.

'Twas hers, with manners mild, refin'd,
Superior sense, and sweetness join'd,
To win affection's smile;
To lure to blest religion's sway,
And by her pure celestial ray
Adversity beguile.

Ah! why subdu'd th' exalted mind,
The sphere of usefulness confin'd,
And crush'd its noble aim:
To know why thus thy sacred will,
O thou! who rul'st in wisdom still!
We drop our baffled claim.

O long belov'd! in sorrow dear,
While friendship drops the tender tear,
And breathes the parting sigh,
May faith the ardent hope still give,
Like thee, fair excellence, to live,
Like thee in peace to die.

For the Evening Fire-side.

"The character of the liar," ſays Doctor Johnſon, "is at once ſo hateful and contemptible, that even of thoſe who have loſt their virtue, it might be expected that from the violation of truth they ſhould be reſtrained by their pride. It is natural to expect that a crime thus generally deteſted, ſhould be generally avoided; at leaſt that none ſhould expoſe himſelf to unabated and unpitied infamy, without an adequate temptation. Yet ſo it is, that in defiance of cenſure and contempt, truth is frequently violated, even where the ſubject of converſation could not have been expected to put the paſſions in motion, or to have excited either hope, or fear, or zeal, or malignity, ſufficient to induce any man to put his reputation in hazard, however little he might value it, or to overpower the love of truth, however weak might be its influence."

Among the different deſcriptions of liars that infeſt ſociety, none are more frequently met with than thoſe who are ſo extravagantly fond of the marvellous, as not to be able to tell a ſtory, however trifling, without the moſt ſhameful exaggeration.

Such an one ſees among his hearers the young and the thoughtleſs, who liſten with attention to wonderful relations, and are intereſted in proportion to the ſtrangeneſs of the circumſtances. Proud to find himſelf the only ſpeaker, he is willing to excite admiration at the expenſe of truth.

As the lies of ſuch a man are not eaſily detected, (for they are generally told to the ignorant) how often do they impoſe on credulity. It is vain to argue the improbability of the ſtory; reaſoning is loſt upon ſuch an one, and ridicule is, perhaps, the only weapon that can be uſed with ſucceſs in ſilencing the tongue of ſuch a dealer in wonders.

I recollect an anecdote on this ſubject, which may be worth relating:—A young gentleman, famous for his talents in ſtory telling, had taken paſſage in a ſtage waggon, and was entertaining the company, which was generally compoſed of females, with ſtories, which he declared to be true, but which ſober reaſon would affirm had no pretenſions to probability; and he had the pleaſure of engroſſing the converſation of the company. "Ladies," ſaid an old gentleman, one of the paſſengers, who had become ſick of him—"ladies, I can relate a circumſtance of my life, which ſhall ſurpaſs any thing the gentleman has told you: when I was young, I addreſſed a young lady for whom I had conceived a particular affection: but my addreſſes were very diſagreeable to her brother, from whom I one morning received a challenge. Being too much a man of honor to refuſe to fight, I accepted it, and ſhot through the head him whom I had hoped to embrace one day as a brother: his death became known, and his couſin challenged me to meet him in the ſame manner I did the deceaſed. No alternative remained: I accepted the challenge; our ſeconds were choſen; the time and place were appointed; we met—and, horrible to relate, my antagoniſt actually ſhot me dead." This, as might be expected, produced the effect intended: the youngſter had ſufficient diſcernment to diſcover that the laugh was againſt him, and was induced to be quiet.

Perhaps it may be objected to this kind of ridicule, that, being in itſelf a departure from truth, it is not a proper weapon to be uſed againſt a liar; but when it is ſo palpable as not to be miſtaken for truth, may it not claim the ſame indulgence as the fables of Æſop, ſince nothing ſhort of out-topping a liar is able to put him down?

PLAGIARIST.

March 4, 1806.

SELECTED FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

TO THE WOOD-LARK.

Oh, stay, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again, that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art,
For surely that would touch her heart,
Who kills me with disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nought but love and sorrow join'd,
Such notes of woe could waken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care,
O' speechless grief and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair,
Or my poor heart is broken!

BURNS.

ON SYMPATHY.

" Come then with me thy ſorrows join,
" And eaſe my woes by telling thine."

It is a pure ſtream that ſwells the tide of ſympathy: it is an excellent heart that intereſts itſelf in the feelings of others: It is a heaven-like diſpoſition that engages the affections, and extorts the ſympathetic tear for the misfortunes of a friend. Mankind are ever ſubject to ills, infirmities and diſappointments. Every breaſt, at ſome particular period, experiences ſorrow and diſtreſs. Pains and perplexities are the long-lived companions of human exiſtence: But ſympathy is the balm that can heal theſe wounds. If a perſon, who has loſt a precious friend, can find another who will feelingly participate in his misfortune, he is well nigh compenſated for his loſs. And delightful is the taſk to a feeling mind, of ſoftening the painful pillow of the ſick, amuſing the thoughts of the unhappy, and alleviating the tortures of the afflicted.—How ſatisfied is the conſcience of him, who can reflect that he has added a comfort to the unfortunate, and a ſmile to the clouded features of the diſcontented.—What can afford more refined enjoyment, than to walk, by the ſide of an unhappy friend, in the cooling ſhade, and hear him repeat the hiſtory of his misfortunes, count over the number of his troubles, and kindly drop a tear of pity and condolence when his heart bleeds?

Sympathy is a tender paſſion, the offſpring of refinement, foſtered in the boſom of friendſhip, and nurtured by love, compaſſion, and benevolence. A mind fraught with ſenſiblity is never deſtitute of this friendly ſenſation; and a good heart, however diſquieted, will feel its conſoling influence with thankfulneſs.

PANEGYRIC ON MARRIAGE.

If it be true that our pleaſures are chiefly of a comparative or reflected kind, how ſupreme muſt be theirs, who continually reflect on each other the portraitures of happineſs; whoſe amuſements,

" Tho' varied ſtill, are ſtill the ſame in infinite progreſſion."

How tranquil is the ſtate of that boſom which has, as it were, a door perpetually open to the reception of joy or departure of pain, by uninterrupted confidence in, and ſympathy with, the object of its affection! I know of no part of the ſingle or bachelor's eſtate, more irkſome than the privation we feel by it, of any friendly breaſt in which to pour our delights, or from whence to extract an antidote for whatever may chance to give us pain. The mind of a good man I believe to be rather communicative than torpid; if ſo, how often may a youth of even the beſt principles expoſe himſelf to very diſagreeable ſenſations, from ſentiments inadvertently dropped, or a confidence improperly repoſed. What but ſilence can be recommended to them; ſince, in breaking it, ſo much danger is incurred, among thoſe little intereſted in our welfare? A good heart, it is true, need not fear the expoſition of its amiable contents; but alas, is it always a ſecurity for us, that we mean well, when our expreſſions are liable to be miſconſtrued by ſuch as appear to lie in wait only to pervert them to ſome ungenerous purpoſe? The charms, then, of ſocial life, and the ſweets of domeſtic converſation, are no ſmall incitements to the marriage ſtate. What more agreeable than the converſation of an intelligent, amiable, and intereſting friend? But what more intelligent than a well educated female? What more amiable than gentleneſs and ſenſibility itſelf? Or what friend more intereſting than ſuch an one as we have ſelected from the whole world, to be our ſteady companion, in every viciſſitude of ſeaſons or of life? "Give me ſome companion," ſays Sterne, "in my journey, be it only to re-
" mark to, how our ſhadows lengthen as
" the ſun goes down; to whom I may ſay,
" how freſh is the face of nature! how
" ſweet the flowers of the field! how de-
" licious are theſe fruits!"

If either of the parties be verſed in muſic, what a tide of innocent delight muſt it prove: to ſoothe in adverſity, to humanize in proſperity, to compoſe in noiſe, and to command ſerenity in every ſituation. If books have any charms for them, (and muſt they not be taſteleſs if they have not) well might the poet of nature place them in company like this:

" An elegant ſufficiency, content,
" Retirement, rural quiet, friendſhip, books,
" Eaſe, and alternate labour, uſeful life,
" Progreſſive virtue, and approving heaven."

What a tranſition is it from what a Skakeſpeare wrote, to what a Handel played! How charming a relaxation from the neceſſary avocations of buſineſs! "Of buſineſs, do you ſay?" Yes; for I number this too, among the pleaſures of the happily married. Let the lady find agreeable employment at home, in the domeſtic economy of her houſehold, but let the gentleman be purſuing, by unremitted and honeſt induſtry, new comforts for her, for his children, and for himſelf.

Is there not ſome gratification too, in reflecting, that the bleſſings of the marriage ſtate are more ſecure and permanent than moſt others which fall within the compaſs of human life? It is the haven of a ſea of gallantries, of turbulence, and fears. Other friendſhips are ſeen to fade, to languiſh, and to die, by removal of abode, by variance of intereſt, by injuries, or even by miſtakes; but this is co-equal with life: the preſent exiſtence has been called a ſtate of trial, and of preparation for a better: marriage is the perfection of it; here our education is completed; all the ſympathies and affections of the citizen, the parent, and the friend, have their fulleſt ſpheres aſſigned them; and, doubtleſs, that pair, who, in this engagement, are truly happy and irreproachable, muſt have ſo qualified themſelves by a thouſand inſtances of mutual affection and forbearance, for an improved ſtate of manners and ſociety, that they may be pronounced to have reached the pinnacle of human felicity, from whence to heaven the tranſition will neither be difficult nor ſtrange; for that is the home to which the beſt improvements of ſocial life are only framed to conduct us.

" Evening comes at laſt, ſerene and mild,
" When after the long vernal day of life,
" Enamour'd more, as more remembrance ſwells
" With many a proof of recollected love;
" Together down they ſink in ſocial ſleep,
" Together freed, their gentle ſpirits fly
" To ſcenes where love and bliſs immortal reign."

THOMSON.

THE ROBIN.—*By the late William Clifton, of Philadelphia.*

From winter ſo dreary and long,
Eſcap'd, ah! how welcome the day,
Sweet Bob, with his innocent ſong,
Is return'd to his favorite ſpray.

When the voice of the tempeſt was heard,
As o'er the bleak mountain it paſs'd,
He hied to the thicket, poor bird!
And ſhrunk from the pitileſs blaſt.

By the maid of the valley ſurvey'd
Did ſhe melt at thy comfortleſs lot;
Her hand, was it ſtretch'd to thy aid,
As thou pickd'ſt at the door of her cot?

She did; and the wintery wind,
May it howl not around her green grove;
Be a boſom ſo gentle and kind
Only fann'd by the breathings of love.

She did; and the kiſs of her ſwain
With rapture the deed ſhall requite,
That gave to my window again
Poor Bob, and his ſong of delight.

Human ſports not ſuch as can gratify pure benevolence.

How vain the joy for which our pain muſt pay!

It has been remarked, that the play of brutes is always a mock fight; and, perhaps, this is equally true of all the ſports that have been invented by reaſon for the amuſement of mankind. The celebrated games of antiquity were ſomething more; the conflict was often fatal, and the pleaſure of the ſpectators ſeems to have been proportioned to the danger of the combatants: nor does it appear, that any ſport has been ſince contrived, which can gratify pure benevolence, or entertain without producing an oppoſition of intereſt. There are, indeed, many, external advantages which, it has never been thought immoral to acquire, though an oppoſition of intereſt is neceſſarily implied; advantages, which like a ſtake at cards, one party can only gain by the loſs of the other; for wealth and poverty, obſcurity and diſtinction, command and ſervitude, are mutually relative, and the exiſtence of each is by each reciprocally derived and given.

Play, therefore, is not unlawful, merely as a conteſt; nor can the pleaſure of them that win, be imputed to a criminal want of benevolence, in this ſtate of imperfection, merely becauſe it is enjoyed at the expence of thoſe who loſe. But as in buſineſs, it has never been held lawful to circumvent thoſe whom we deſire to excel; ſo in play, the chance of loſs and gain ought to be always equal; at leaſt, each party ſhould be apprized of the force employed againſt him; and if then he plays againſt odds, no man has a right to enquire his motive, though a good man would decline to engage him.

There is, however, one ſpecies of diverſion which has not been generally condemned, though it is produced by an attack upon thoſe who have not voluntarily entered the liſts; who find themſelves buffetted in the dark, and have neither means of defence nor poſſibility of advantage.

Theſe feats are achieved by the knights-errant of mirth, and known by the name of Frolics: under this name, indeed, many ſpecies of wanton cruelty have been practiſed, without incurring the infamy, or raiſing the indignation which they deſerve; and it is extremely difficult to fix upon any certain criterion, by which frolics may be diſtinguiſhed into criminal and innocent. If we could diſcern effects while they are involved in their cauſes, and aſcertain every remote conſequence of our own actions, perhaps theſe ſallies might be allowed under the ſame reſtrictions as raillery: the falſe alarms and ridiculous diſtreſs into which others are betrayed to make us ſport, ſhould be ſuch only as will be ſubjects of merriment even to the ſufferer when they are paſt, and remembered neither with reſentment nor regret: but as every action may produce effects over which human power has no influence, and which human ſagacity cannot foreſee: we ſhould not lightly venture to the verge of evil, nor ſtrike at others though with a reed, leſt like the rod of Moſes it become a ſerpent in our hands.

During the hard froſt in the year 1790, four young gentlemen of conſiderable rank rode into an inn, near one of the principal avenues to this city, at eleven o'clock at night, without any attendant; and having expreſſed uncommon concern about their horſes, and overlooked the proviſion that was made for them, called for a room; ordering wine and tobacco to be brought in, and declaring, that as they were to ſet out very early in the morning, it was not worth while to go to bed. Before the waiter returned, each of them had laid a pocket piſtol upon the table, which when he entered they appeared to be very ſolicitous to conceal, and ſhewed ſome confuſion at the ſurprize. They perceived with great ſatisfaction that the fellow was alarmed at his diſcovery; and having upon various pretences called him often into the room, one of them contrived to pull out a maſk with his handkerchief from the pocket of a horſeman's coat. They diſcourſed in dark and ambiguous terms, affected a buſy and anxious circumſpection, urged the man often to drink, and ſeemed deſirous to render him ſubſervient to ſome purpoſe which they were unwilling to diſcover. They endeavoured to conciliate his good-will, by extravagant commendations of his dexterity, and diligence, and encouraged him to familiarity, by aſking him many queſtions: he was, however, ſtill cautious and reſerved; one of them, therefore, pretended to have known his mother, put a crown into his hand, and ſoon after took an opportunity to aſk him at what hour a ſtage-coach, the paſſengers of which they intended to humbug, ſet out in the morning, whether it was full, and if it was unattended with a guard.

The man was now confirmed in his ſuſpicions; and thought he had accepted the bribe, reſolved to diſcover his ſecret. Having evaded the queſtions with as much art as he could, he went to his maſter, Mr. Spiggot, who was then in bed, and acquainted him with what he had obſerved.

Mr. Spiggot immediately got up and held a conſultation with his wife what was to be done. She adviſed him immediately to ſend for the conſtable with proper aſſiſtants, and ſecure them: but he conſidered, that as this would probably prevent a robbery, it would deprive him of an opportunity to gain a very conſiderable ſum, which he would become entitled to upon their conviction, if he could apprehend them after the fact; he, therefore, very prudently called up four or five of the oſtlers that belonged to the yard, and having communicated his ſuſpicions and deſign, engaged them to enliſt under his command as an eſcort to the coach, and to watch the motions of the highwaymen as he ſhould direct. But mine hoſt alſo wiſely conſidering, that this expedition would be attended with certain expence, and that the profit which he hoped was contingent, acquainted the paſſengers with their danger, and propoſed that a guard ſhould be hired by a voluntary contribution; a propoſal, to which, upon a ſight of the robbers through the window, they readily agreed. Spiggot was now ſecured againſt pecuniary loſs at all events, and about three o'clock the knights of the frolic with infinite ſatisfaction beheld five paſſengers, among whom there was but one gentleman, ſtep into the coach with the aſpect of criminals going to execution; and enjoyed the ſignificant ſigns which paſſed between them and the landlord, concerning the precautions taken for their defence.

As ſoon as the coach was gone, the ſuppoſed highwaymen paid their reckoning in great haſte, and called for their horſes: care had already been taken to ſaddle them; for it was not Mr. Spiggot's deſire that the adventurers ſhould go far before they executed their purpoſe; and as ſoon as they departed he prepared to follow them with his poſſe. He was, indeed, greatly ſurpriſed to ſee, that they turned the contrary way when they went out of the inn-yard; but he ſuppoſed they might chuſe to take a ſmall circuit to prevent ſuſpicion, as they might eaſily overtake the coach whenever they would; he determined, however, to keep behind them; and, therefore, inſtead of going after the coach, followed them at a diſtance, till to his utter diſappointment he ſaw them perſiſt in a different rout, and at length turn into an inn in Picaddilly, where ſeveral ſervants in livery appeared to have been waiting for them, and where his

curiosity was soon gratified with their characters and their names.

In the mean time the coach proceeded in its journey. The panic of the passengers increased upon perceiving that the guard which they had hired did not come up; and they began to accuse Spiggot, of having betrayed them to the robbers for a share of the booty; they could not help looking every moment from the window, though it was so dark that a waggon could not have been seen at the distance of twenty yards: every tree was mistaken for a man and horse, the noise of the vehicle in which they rode was believed to be the trampling of pursuers, and they expected every moment to hear the coachman commanded to stop, and to see a pistol thrust in amongst them, with the dreadful injunction, "Deliver your money."

Thus far the distress, however great and unmerrited, will be deemed ridiculous; the sufferers will appear to have ingeniously tormented themselves, by the sagacity with which they reasoned from appearances intended to deceive them, and their solicitude to prevent mischiefs which none would attempt.

But it happened that when the coach had got about two miles out of town, it was overtaken by a horseman who rode very hard, and called out with great eagerness to the driver to stop: this incident, among persons who had suffered perpetual apprehension and alarm from the moment they set out, produced a proportionate effect. The wife of the gentleman was so terrified, that she sunk down from her seat; and he was so much convinced of his danger, so touched at her distress, and so incensed against the ruffian who produced it, that without uttering a word he drew a pistol from his pocket, and seeing the man parley with the coachman, who had now stopped his horses, he shot him dead upon the spot.

The man, however, who had thus fallen the victim of a frolic, was soon known to be the servant of a lady who had paid earnest for the vacant place in the stage; and having by some accident been delayed till it was set out, had followed it in a hackney coach, and sent him before her to detain it till she came up.

Here the ridicule is at end; and we are surprized that we did not sooner reflect, that the company had sufficient cause for their fear and their precaution, and that the frolic was nothing more than a lie, which it would have been folly not to believe, and presumption to disregard.

The next day, while the bucks were entertaining a polite circle at White's with an account of the farce they had played the night before, news arrived of the catastrophe. A sudden confusion covered every countenance; and they remained some time silent, looking upon each other, mutually accused, reproached and condemned.

This favourable moment was improved by a gentleman, who, though sometimes seen in that assembly, is yet eminent for his humanity and his wisdom. "A man," said he, "who found himself bewildered in the intricacies of a labyrinth, when the sun was going down, would think himself happy, if a clue should be put into his hand by which he might be led out in safety: he would not, surely, quit it for a moment, because it might possibly be recovered; and, if he did, would be in perpetual danger of stumbling upon some othe wanderer, and bringing a common calamity upon both. In the maze of life we are often bewildered, and darkness and danger surround us: but every one may at least secure conscience against the power of accident, by adhering inviolably to that rule, by which we are enjoined to abstain even from the appearance of evil.

[ADVENTURER.]

Causes of the General Diffusion of Knowledge in Scotland, and Means for producing a Similar Effect in the United States.

That the poorer class of people are generally better educated in Scotland than in any other country, has been often remarked. But, although the truth of this remark is almost universally admitted, the cause of this extension of knowledge is, in this country, very imperfectly understood. That it must be owing to a cheapness in the acquisition of learning is obvious; but the causes of this cheapness are not so apparent. Convinced that information on this head will be useful, inasmuch as it will suggest hints for improvements among ourselves; I am persuaded that it will be acceptable to the readers of your useful miscellany, and have therefore endeavoured to throw together such ideas on the subject as result from my enquiries and personal observation.

Scotland is divided into between seven and eight hundred districts, usually termed parishes. In each of these is appointed one or more public school-masters, according to its population. To each of these school-masters is allowed a small salary, of from fifteen to thirty pounds sterling; and commonly a dwelling and school-house, with an exemption from district taxes: in consideration of which they are bound to instruct all the children of their respective parishes who choose to pay a small, fixed, quarterly fee and attend their schools. In country parishes this quarterly fee does not exceed two shillings and six pence sterling, or four shillings and two pence Pennsylvania currency; and, in the cities and populous towns, it is equal to about one dollar and ten cents.

The salary of the tutor is drawn from a tax laid on the proprietors of the land in the parish, who pay in proportion to their possessions. The smallness of the salary will show how trifling is the burden on the land-holder, when compared with its advantageous effects.

In the country these teachers are generally elected by the proprietors of the land, and must be qualified to teach their pupils the English language grammatically, writing, arithmetic, &c. In cities and towns they are usually elected by the magistrates; and, as there are generally two or more of these tutors in a town, to each is assigned a particular department. One teaches reading, writing, &c. another the Latin, &c. In Edinburgh, for instance, there are nine: the salaries of these are paid out of the city revenues. When a vacancy occurs, an advertisement is inserted in the public newspapers, giving notice that, for the purpose of filling up this vacancy, on a certain specified day a meeting will be held at the town-hall, to which candidates are invited. Here they produce specimens of their abilities, and the electors determine who is best calculated for the important office.

Thus is learning placed within the reach of the poorest people in Scotland. The system is universal, and hence there are few instances of pride or conceit keeping the children of those in better circumstances, from attending the public schools. In the same class are frequently found the son of the laird, the farmer, and the plowman.*

As an institution of this kind must have a powerful influence over the public mind and morals; as there is no insurmountable obstacle to such an establishment, even improved, in this country; as every friend to America must feel interested in this particular, and, as it is the duty of every individual to contribute his mite to the promotion of so desirable an object, I shall ven-

* In Scotland, a laird is a proprietor of land; a farmer is generally a tenant; and a plowman a hired servant.

ture, in a concise manner, to give a sketch of a plan which I believe would answer the purpose; hoping that it may induce a more able hand to give the subject an ample discussion.

First then, I would propose that the legislature of every state in the Union should enact a law, directing that an election should take place in each township every two years, for one or more teachers, according to its extent and population; that these teachers be elected by the heads of families; that they be allowed a yearly salary, not exceeding two hundred dollars each, to be paid by a tax laid on the landholders of each township, in proportion to their possessions; and that every child be entitled to the instruction of the teacher of the township, on paying one dollar per quarter.

Secondly, That for every teacher so appointed, a sum (say five hundred dollars) be drawn from the revenue of the state for the purpose of providing a comfortable dwelling and school-house.

Thirdly, That after such buildings are, in the first instance, thus provided, they be kept up forever, at the expence of the respective townships in which they are situated.

This plan would effectually prevent the serious evils which result from a very great defect in the mode pursued in Scotland. There the teachers are appointed for an indefinite term of time; and, although they can abandon their charge at pleasure, they cannot be removed from the office but by an action at the civil law. Hence it has often happened that a teacher has displayed a line of conduct which rendered him a very unfit preceptor of youth, without its being of that nature which, on a prosecution, would deprive him of the office. Thus it frequently happens, that the parish school-master enjoys as a sinecure, during his pleasure, what was designed for public utility, whilst the heads of families contribute, by subscriptions, a sum equal to the stablished salary, and procure a more suitable person to perform the duties.

But corporations, towns, and associations of well disposed persons, without limiting the pupils to any particular district, may, at a small expence, establish schools on a plan similar to that which I have proposed, and thus render infinite service to the country, even though the legislatures should take no measures to have it generally adopted.

Philadelphia, April 6, 1798.

[*Weekly Magazine.*]

Henry Duke of Saxony.

Henry was by nature fierce and haughty, eager in his pursuits, impatient of disappointment or controul. This temper was fortified by a bad education; as soon as he could reflect, he reflected that he was a sovereign; and he was ever soothed in the notions that a prince is above all law; at the same time he was inclined to the principles of justice and honour, where his passions did not oppose; and he had a profound awe for the Supreme Being, which, by his wicked life, deviated into superstition. The outrages committed by this prince were without end; every thing was sacrificed to his lust, cruelty, and ambition; and at his court, beauty, riches, honours, became the greatest misfortunes. His horrid enormities filled him with suspicion; if a grandee absented, it was for leisure to form plots; if he was submissive and obedient, it was merely dissimulation. Thus did the prince live woefully solitary, in the midst of fancied society; at enmity with every one, and, least of all, at peace with himself; sinning daily, repenting daily, feeling the agonies of reproving conscience, which haunted him waking, and left him not when a sleep.

In a melancholy fit, under the impression of a wicked action recently perpetrated, he dreamed that the tutelar angel of the country stood before him, with anger in his looks, mixed with some degree of pity. "Ill-fated wretch" said the apparition, "listen to the awful command I bear: the Almighty, unwilling to cut thee off in the fulness of iniquity, has sent me to give thee warning." Upon this, the angel reached a scroll of paper, and vanished. The The scroll contained the following words: "After six." Here the dream ended, for the impression it made broke his rest. The prince awaked in the greatest consternation, deeply struck with the vision. He was convinced that the whole was from God, to prepare him for death; which he concluded was to happen in six months, perhaps in six days; and that this time was allotted him to make his peace with his Maker, by an unfeigned repentance for all his crimes. How idle and unpleasant seemed those objects which he formerly pursued, at the expence of religion and humanity! Where is now that lust of command, which occasioned so much bloodshed? that cruel malice and envy against every contending power? that suspicious jealousy, the cause of much imaginary treason, furies fostered in his bosom preying incessantly upon his vitals, and yet darlings of his soul? Happy expulsion, if not succeeded by the greatest of all evils, black despair! Thus, in the utmost torment of mind, six days, six weeks, and six months, passed away, but death did not follow; and now he concluded that six years were to be the period of his miserable life. By this time, the violence of his tempest was over: hitherto he had sequestered himself from mankind, and had spent in abstinence and private worship, the short time he thought allotted him. He now began to form resolutions of a more thorough repentance; now was he fixed to do good, as he formerly had done mischief, with all his heart. The supposed shortness of his warning had hitherto not left it in his power to repair the many injuries he had committed, which was the weightiest load upon his mind.—Now was he resolved to make the most ample reparation. In this state, where hope prevailed, and some beams of sunshine appeared breaking through the cloud, he addressed himself to his maker in the following terms: "O thou glorious and omnipotent Being! parent and preserver of all things! how lovely art thou in peace and reconciliation! but oh, how terrible to the workers of iniquity! While my hands are lifted up, how doth my heart tremble, for manifold have been my transgressions! Headlong driven by impetuous passions, I deserted the path of virtue, and wandered through every species of iniquity; trampling conscience under foot, I surrendered myself to delusions, which, under the colour of good, abandoned me still to misery and remorse; happy only, if, at any moment, an offended conscience could be laid a sleep. But what source of happiness in doing good! and in feeling the calm sunshine of virtue and honour! O my conscience! when thou art a friend, what imports it who is an enemy? when thou lookest dreadful, where are they fled; all the blessings, all the amusements of life? Thanks to a superabundant mercy, that hath not left me to reprobation and misery, but hath indulged a longer day for repentance. Good God! the lashes of agonizing remorse let me never more feel; be it now my only concern in this life, to establish with my conscience a faithful correspondence: my inordinate passions, those deluding enchanters, root thou out for the work is too mighty for my weak endeavours.—And oh! would thou my soul into that moderation of desire, and just ballance of affection, without no enjoyment is solid, no pleasure mixt with pain.—Here-

after, let it not be ſufficient to be quiet and inoffenſive; but, ſince graciouſly to my life, thou haſt added many days; may all be ſpent in doing good: let that day be deemed loſt, which ſees me not employed in ſome work beneficial to my ſubjects or mankind, that at laſt, I may lay down in piece comforted, if I have not proved in every reſpect, an unprofitable ſervant."

His endeavours were to regain the confidence of his nobles, and love of his people. With unremitting application he attended to their good; and ſoon felt that ſatisfaction in conſidering himſelf as their father, which he never knew when he conſidered them as his ſlaves. He now began to reliſh the pleaſures of ſocial intercourſe, of which pride and jealouſy had made him hitherto inſenſible. He had thought friendſhip a chimera deviſed to impoſe upon mankind: convinced now of its reality, the cultivation of it was one of his chief objects. Man he found to be honeſt and faithful, deſerving eſteem, and capable of friendſhip: hitherto he had judged of others by the corrupt emotions of his own heart. Well he remembered his many gloomy moments of diſguſt and remorſe, his ſpleen and humour, the never failing attendants of vice and debauchery. Fearful to expoſe his wicked purpoſes, and dreading every ſearching eye, he had eſtranged himſelf from the world; and what could he expect, conſcious as he was of a depraved heart, but averſion and horror? Miſerable is the ſtate, cut off from all comfort, in which an unhappy mortal's chief concern is to fly from man; becauſe every man is his enemy. After taſting of this miſery, how did he bleſs the happy changes? Now, always calm and ſerene, diffuſive benevolence gilded every thought of his heart and action of his life. It was now his delight to be ſeen, and lay open his noble ſoul; for, in it dwelt harmony and peace. Fame, become his friend, blazed his virtues all around; and in diſtant regions was the good prince known, where his vices had never reached. Among his virtues an abſolute and pure diſintereſtedneſs claimed every where the chief place; in all diſputes, he was the conſtant moderator betwixt ſovereigns, and between them and their ſubjects; and he gained more authority over neighbouring princes by eſteem and reverence, than they had over their own ſubjects.

In this manner elapſed the ſix years, till the fatal period came. The viſion was fulfilled; but very differently from what was expected: for, at this preciſe period, a vacancy happening, he was unanimouſly choſen Emperor of Germany.

SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN.—*Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Trinidad, dated Jan. 25.*

"The negroes in this place have attempted to riſe, but the plot was fortunately diſcovered by a negro woman who informed againſt them, before the plan was carried into execution, in which they intended to put every white perſon to the ſword, men, women, and children. The inhabitants are under martial law; which I am informed is to be taken off ſoon. There has been a day of general thankſgiving, for being ſo fortunate as to diſcover the conſpiracy which would have coſt them their lives."

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DOMESTIC.—A bill has paſſed both houſes of the legiſlature of this ſtate, extending the charter of the Philadelphia Bank ten years beyond the original period, and authorizing the governor to ſubſcribe, on the part of the ſtate, for ſtock in ſaid bank to the amount of one hundred thouſand dollars.

On Saturday laſt, between the hours of eleven and twelve o'clock, A. M. a fire was diſcovered in a building contiguous and belonging to the brewery of Meſſrs. ROBERT HARE and SON, in Callowhill-ſtreet, near Front-ſtreet; and notwithſtanding the wind was remarkably ſtrong from the north weſt, no other injury was ſuſtained than the deſtruction of the contents of the upper ſtory and roof of the building in which it originated.

Meadville, (Penn.) Dec. 12.—Eleven flat-bottom and ſix keel boats, loaded with ſalt, paſſed by this place during the laſt freſh in the French creek—the former carrying on an average 170, and the latter 60 bbls. each, making in the whole 2,220 bbls.; this, computed at 11 dollars per barrel, at this place, amounts to 24,330 dollars; the ſelling price at Pittſburgh is now 13 dollars, which will make it amount to 23,990 dollars. During the preceding ſummer, ſpring, and winter, more than double the foregoing quantity was brought acroſs the carrying place between Erie and Waterford, which was either conſumed in the Allegany and Ohio river, or in this and the neighbouring counties, amounting in the whole to upwards of 80,000 dollars. This ſalt is made in the ſtate of New-York, and it is brought up the Ontario and Erie; and there is not more than ten miles carriage until it comes to the town of Erie, from thence to Waterford there is a portage of 15 miles to the head of the navigation of French creek, which opens a ſafe and cheap conveyance of that valuable article, to the populous ſettlement on the Ohio.

Appointments by the Governor.

JACOB RUSH, Eſq. Preſident of the *Firſt Diſtrict*, compoſed of the city and county of Philadelphia, in the place of William Tilghman, Eſq. appointed Chief Juſtice.

JOHN SPAYD, Eſq. Preſident of the *Third Diſtrict*, compoſed of the counties of Berks, Northampton, and Wayne.

JONATHAN WALKER, Eſq. in the room of Thomas Cooper, Eſq. Preſident of the *Fourth Diſtrict*, compoſed of the counties of Mifflin, Centre, Huntingdon and Bedford.

BIRD WILSON, Eſq Preſident of the *Seventh Diſtrict*, compoſed of the counties of Delaware, Cheſter, Bucks, and Montgomery.

THOMAS COOPER, Eſq. Preſident of the *Eighth Diſtrict*, compoſed of the counties of Northumberland, Luzerne, and Lycoming.

JAMES HAMILTON, Eſq. Preſident of the *Ninth Diſtrict*, compoſed of the counties of Adams, Cumberland, and Franklin.

JOHN YOUNG, Eſq. Preſident of the *Tenth Diſtrict*, compoſed of the counties of Somerſet, Cambria, Indiana, Armſtrong, and Weſtmoreland.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We endeavoured to follow PHANTOM in his "airy flight to the top of Pindus," but he is ſuch a ſoaring genius that really he ſoon was *out of ſight*.

We have read SOB's laſt favour with attention, and muſt own that it is leſs difficult to ſolve his firſt, which truly was an *Enigma*, than to make ſenſe of the laſt.

LIMBO's communication proves him to be not deſtitute of talent; but as we think the ſubject objectionable, we have taken the liberty to place it in *limbo*.

The lines *written by a young lady 12 years old*, may be well enough for a girl of her age; but they are too crude to be preſented to older readers.

AFER and CARRELL are not forgotten.

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a number of judicious Selections.

We are oppoſed to Enigmas in general; but an *Enigmatical liſt of the ſtreets!* a ſtranger would think them puzzling enough as they are.

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